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Dear Professor Lange,

It is very pleasant to hear from you after all these years and it is even better to deduce that you still are in fine fettle and it is just as good to receive a copy of your big book and to appreciate the originality of your thought –away from whatever is the mainstream, yes, but than that is the way to go forward!

I reread many of the older articles and especially the three new essays. On section one (and as a person who did work for a short while in Lybia) I can only say that you are absolutely right and it is a shame that none of the sites on the central route has been excavated or studied yet. Meanwhile the British Academy has finally published the long term results concerning the Garamantes and that should help with further hypotheses. It is clear that this never was a big kingdom, yet also that they did exert great influence (see rock art discussions in the Tassili “next door”). I have not seen the details yet but I seem to recall that typical Garamantes pottery was found only a little south of Murzuk. One expects that such pottery might (should?) be found along this route as well? – One should also focus on the presence of iron working, smithing or even just iron objects for if ironworking was not invented independently in Air/Termit it may have come from the north along this route now that we know how old ironworking is in Carthage (8th century BCE it seems).

On sections two and three we now do have more data about ancient settlement from the results of the archaeological investigations by the Frankfurt team (e.g. summary 2003 in Krings +Platte *Living with the Lake Köln* 2003. From this it is clear that there was a renovation of settlement etc with the introduction of iron (unfortunately can only be dated by C-14 to between 840-420 BCE and that in the following centuries settlement was not yet so dense (at the sites found see *Journal Archaeology* 2004 I believe) that we might think of a strong kingdom of any sort either at Gajiganna or in the firki south of the lake. This is very important for your theses since it makes direct transmission from North Africa in Canaanite times etc.(here Phoenician) quite unlikely. As it is the only direct evidence from an early use of the central Sahara route dates from just after Christ with the figurine found (Bube Gado) in the Dosso district. Still the Frankfurt sites seem to rule out any genuine social complexity before the early or middle first millennium CE. That (and the finds in Yorubaland cf. Akinwumi Ogundiran “Chronology, Material Culture, and Pathways to the Cultural History of Yoruba-Edo Region 500 BC-AD 1800” –Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, *Sources and Methods in African History: spoken, written, unearthed*, Rochester 2003.33-79 even though you are right that the probably oldest parts of Ife have not been even test-excavated. Some social complexity seems to develop only around 500 CE (AD) that is too late for your theory of transmission.

The great merit in my eyes of your XII and XV is that they set out a set of rituals that need to be explained and that have not been accounted for as yet in anyway. I must confess that I have always linked the stories about the killing of a snake/monster + the St George story to the earliest documented iconography of Roman age in Egypt concerning Horus and Bes (the crocodile) although there really is not much evidence west of the Nile (a bit of "possible sites" in western Sudan + one site on the Bahr elGhazal in Chad. But I confess that I am lost when it comes to comparative mythology anywhere (and especially in the Middle East). There are plenty of parallels but while that is by itself enough for establishing that there is an issue to be explained here it is not enough by itself to build the kind of explanations you are proposing and the few word parallels that are adduced are too loose to rule out chance similarity etc.

Moreover once again there is an archaeological problem. No land has been more intensely excavated than Israel yet no evidence at all has been found about the kingdom of Saul/David/Solomon except for a badly broken inscription mentioning the "house of David". A flood of recent studies about the writing and reliability of the early portions of the Bible (including by Israeli scholars) raise strong doubts about everything that antedates the middle portions of the book of Kings (or in the wider arena the Assyrian age?). The picture also strongly contrasts with the Menerptah stele, But in all of this I am way out of my depth. Still hypotheses such as yours should take all of this into account. For the moment it seems to me that while you raise very important issues convincing explanations may take a very long time still to mature. – I do know though, for what it is worth, that in central African savanna areas the similarities in "divine kingship: emblems, rituals etc. have emerged in the last half millennium or so before 1800 and that their complexity and "family air" is due to mutual borrowing over that whole period (and even later). So would the explanations in Nigeria also not involve a long and complex history with perhaps some outside inputs and then a great deal of local elaborations borrowed from kingdom to kingdom perhaps only from the mid- or late first millennium onwards? But let me also underline that while we may not see eye to eye on the solutions you ^{book} bring, it is most important to raise new points of view and propose new explanations for that is the best way to foster sound scholarship. And in that you succeed admirably.

As to your essay XX, I think that your views are essentially right and that more and more scholars begin to follow them. Farias de Moraes on inscriptions certainly goes in the same direction, but I admit that I have as yet had no time to really study his book and compare it to your essay as to the details mentioned. And I do like your own addenda and corrigenda.

With me all is reasonably well. I just finished publishing what will be my last book based on some research in depth. It is called *How Societies are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* and it deals with the issue of how a series of complex societies arose out of the small communities of nomadic foragers that lived in and around Angola/Southern Congo/Northern Namibia in the last centuries BCE. I hope to send you a copy in a little while for I am out of them right at the moment and expect further copies only around May/June of this year. From now on I expect only to tinker on a few articles (right now one on the introduction of Ironworking in Bantu speaking Africa, as based on linguistics) for age is certainly beginning to assert itself!

Again thanks for sending me your book,

With warm wishes and cordially yours,

Vannina